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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL USAF
17TH DISTRICT OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS
KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, NEW MEXICO

DR/MEN/web

12 May 1949

File No: 24-8

SUBJECT: UNKNOWN (Aerial Phenomena), Review of reports

TO: Director of Special Investigations
Office of The Inspector General USAF
Washington 25, D. C.

1. Reference is made to TWX from this district, OSI 4-26-C, dated 27 April 1949, pertaining to file number 24-8 of this district.

2. On 27 and 28 April 1949, Dr Joseph Kaplan, University of California, Member of the Scientific Advisory Board, USAF, visited this district office and other Governmental and military installations in the area. The purpose of this visit was to review the reports of investigation and the circumstances surrounding the unidentified aerial phenomena that have been observed in this area during the last five months and to thereby make recommendations as to the advisability of making a scientific investigation of these occurrences. The investigation of Dr Kaplan was conducted under orders transmitted to him by Dr Theodore Von Karman, Secretary of the Scientific Advisory Board, USAF.

3. Dr Joseph Kaplan, accompanied by Lt Col Doyle Rees and Captain Melvin E. Neef, of this office, and Dr Lincoln LaPaz, Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico, visited Sandia Base, New Mexico, and Los Alamos, New Mexico.

4. Present at the conference at Sandia Base on the morning of 27 April 1949 were:

Lt Col Herbert L. Crisler, Armed Forces Special Weapons Project
Lt Col Fredrick J. Clark, Armed Forces Special Weapons Project
Mr Matthew J. Doyle, Armed Forces Special Weapons Project
Condr R. E. Mandelkorn, Armed Forces Special Weapons Project
Dr Joseph Kaplan
Dr Lincoln LaPaz
Lt Col Doyle Rees
Captain Melvin [redacted]

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
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CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
BY AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR, USAF
BY KURT R. KELZ, Capt, USAF
Historian
DATE 8 DEC 1975

OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

UNCLASSIFIED

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BASIC: Letter, Hq 17th District OSI (IG) USAF, dated 12 May 1949 file number 24-8, subject, "UNKNOWN (Aerial Phenomena)"

a. At this conference Dr Kaplan reviewed developments of interest in the aerial phenomena on the part of the Scientific Advisory Board, following his report to Dr Von Karman concerning information given him early in February by Dr LaPaz, Lt Col Doyle Rees, Major William H. Godsoe, Fourth Army Intelligence Liaison, Sandia Base, and Captain Melvin E. Neef. Additional evidence, concerning not only specific incidents, but relating to the very intense interest felt in the aerial phenomena in the area covered by the represented agencies, was then given by Lt Col Crisler, Lt Col Rees, Commander Mandelkorn and Captain Neef. At the conclusion of the testimony given by the individuals listed above, Dr Kaplan stated that it was his intention, on the basis of the information so far made available to him, to recommend that a full scale scientific investigation of the aerial phenomena be undertaken as a project set up at the Institute of Meteoritics of the University of New Mexico, The Institute to receive full cooperation from other interested agencies in the area. Dr Kaplan stressed that this project was to be separated completely from Project "Grudge" (old Project "Sign").

b. Dr LaPaz outlined the program to be undertaken in the event the project suggested by Dr Kaplan was approved by the Scientific Advisory Board. Dr LaPaz separated the problem into two parts: first, the collection of observation data; and second, the evaluation of such data.

(1) Collection of Data: Under this heading Dr LaPaz recommended that attempts be made to secure systematic visual, photographic, spectographic and radar observations of the aerial phenomena occurring in the vicinity of at least the following three centers: first, the Atomic Energy Commission installation at Los Alamos, New Mexico; second, the Atomic Energy Commission installation at Sandia Base; and third, the USAF Guided Missile installation at Holloman Air Force Base, Alamogordo, New Mexico. Lt Col Rees emphasized that provision should be made to secure systematic coverage at the Fourth Army installation at Camp Hood, Texas, where a number of incidents have occurred recently. Dr LaPaz also recommended that field searches be made after appropriate air reconnaissance, such searches to employ drag-magnets for the collection of any ferro-magnetic materials that may have been thrown down by the fireballs; meteor detectors in areas where larger, buried fragments were thought to be located and, if possible, systematic search of the earth's surface in well-determined strewn-fields by use of man power from

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military installations. Dr LaPaz also recommended that, in connection with air search, an attempt be made to collect fine dust and tiny spheres resulting from the volatilization of the fireballs, which conceivable require several days to fall down through the atmosphere to the earth after the appearance of a fireball. It was his recommendation that the collection of such dust be attempted by use of the collection techniques recently devised by Dr William Crozier of the New Mexico Proving Ground.

(2) Evaluation of Data: In connection with the evaluation of the observational data secured and any material specimens that may be recovered, Dr LaPaz recommended that arrangements be made permitting Dr Edward Teller of the University of California Group at Los Alamos, Dr William Crozier of the New Mexico Proving Ground, Dr Kent and his ballistics staff at Aberdeen Proving Ground, and Professor Clyde Tombaugh and his associates at White Sands Proving Ground, to act as consultants for the project. At the conclusion of Dr LaPaz's remark, Commander Mandelkorn recommended that the staff of the Harvard College Observatory Meteor Program installation, near White Sands Proving Ground, also be made available for consultation purposes. Dr LaPaz agreed that this was desirable, but pointed out that it has been impossible to secure cooperation from Mr Carroll of the Harvard College Observatory Group in the past. This point was confirmed by Captain Neef, and Commander Mandelkorn then volunteered to insure that in the future there would be no difficulty in securing cooperation from the HCO Meteor Staff.

5. On the afternoon of 27 April 1949, Dr Kaplan studied the files of the 17th District Office of Special Investigations as pertained to the occurrence of aerial phenomena, and was further briefed by Lt Col Rees, District Commander, Captain John J. Stahl, Jr, Deputy District Commander, Captain Neef, Supervisor of the Security Division, Special Agent Jack L. Boling and Dr LaPaz. No new recommendations arose as a result of this conference, but it was felt that the incidents studied rendered imperative initiation of such a systematic program of investigation as Dr Kaplan had proposed at the Sandia Base conference during the morning.

6. On 28 April 1949 Dr Kaplan, Dr LaPaz, Lt Col Rees and Captain Neef met at the Atomic Energy Commission installation, Los Alamos, New Mexico, with the following:

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Mr B. O. Wells, Director of Security
Mr Sidney Newberger, of the Security Office
Mr John A. Carroll, AEC Security Service
Mr Earle D. Hightower, of the Security Office
Mr Henry R. Hoyt, University of California
Mr Abner Schreiber, AEC Security Service

This conference was held at the request of Dr Kaplan in order that he might ascertain the nature of the observations made by members of the Atomic Energy Commission and the AEC Security Service Inspectors at Los Alamos, and that he might personally determine the degree of concern felt by the Security and scientific personnel at the installation. Dr Kaplan personally interviewed a number of University of California personnel and AEC Security Service Inspectors, who had personally observed anomolous luminous aerial phenomena. No further recommendations were made at this conference. Dr Kaplan stated that he would immediately submit his report to Dr Von Karman, setting out his findings and make the recommendations set forth above.

7. Dr Kaplan expressed a great concern, as these occurrences relate to the National Defense of the United States. He advised that he felt that this was of extreme importance and should be investigated scientifically.

Doyle Rees

DOYLE REES
Lt Col, USAF
District Commander

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